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they only eat pumpkin leaves', i.e. where game is short and the people have to rely on vegetable relishes. They refer to a visit to a village on a big river as, 'He has gone to eat fish with So-and-So.' The fortunes of each district are discussed year by year and villages described as 'with hunger' (*pa nsala*) or the converse, 'with beer' (*pa bwalwa*), i.e. with so much grain that they can make beer frequently. The seasonal changes in food, and the stages in its production, give their names to the periods of the year. While a definite calendar of moons exists (cf. Chap. XVIII) the Bemba more often time events as having taken place 'in the hunger months', i.e. the last months of the rains when the millet supply is low; or 'when we were eating mushrooms', 'when the *mupundu* fruit was ripe', and 'when we were reaping, sowing', &c., and the ages of babies are usually reckoned by dating their births in this manner.

The position of the Bemba traveller, dependent as he is on the hazards of hospitality, provides a further element of uncertainty. The correct greeting to one who has returned from a journey is *Mwalyeni bwino*, 'Have you eaten well?' To which the courteous reply is *Kulila mulelya*, 'Provided you have eaten well yourself', or *E Mukwai kufipwishya*, 'Yes, sir, I eat everything up completely', or else *Fia kwa cilime bafipwa kano wa kulapo panda*, 'It would have been impossible to finish up all the crops unless you had built a house alongside', i.e. it was so plentiful. There is a regular form of magic used to ensure a guest's arrival before a meal has been finished and not after. A knot tied in the grass with the right formula repeated will secure this result, and I found my staff even performed this rite on my own behalf if at all doubtful as to my reception on a visit to unknown English hosts.

Besides this direct interest in the food he is going to eat in the day, or the beer he may have the luck to come in time for, the secondary values acquired by food give it an added emotional interest to the Bemba. It must be remembered that there is no other way of accumulating wealth in this area except by acquiring sufficient food to feed many followers. The giving or receipt of food is a part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief. For this reason the whole question of handling or dividing food acquires tremendous emotional significance for the native, and discussions of personalities or legal relationships tend to be ultimately expressed in this

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Labour and Cooked Food.

●437 The use of food as a form of payment adds to the catering problem of any household. Porridge and relish are not only sent to a man as a form of compliment, but also given him as a reward for his work. The manner of serving or the type of food often makes the only distinction between the two acts. Within the limits of the Bemba economic system there is no other way of obtaining service for a man who is able to organize it, and support for the one who is not. All relationships between an inferior and his superior involve the former in giving some kind of labour, whether in the case of the son-in-law and the father-in-law already described in some detail; the young boy and his legal guardian of the moment, whether father, maternal uncle, or grandfather:[1] or the villager and his headman, and the subject and his chief. The women's duties of service to her kinsmen are less clearly specified, but they also do tribute labour for the chief as does a man. Besides these permanent relationships involving the exchange of labour for food there are a number of temporary forms of service recognized for specific purposes. Though it is impossible to make a clear distinction between the feeding of relatives and the feeding of labourers in a society in which kinship is the basis of economic co-operation, yet both types of distribution affect the dietary situation and hence must be described.

This exchange of cooked food and service is a very concrete conception to the Bemba mind. It is not one of the abstractions the anthropologist makes on the basis of observed behaviour. The difference between the work a man does for himself and that he does for another is recognized linguistically by the use of the special applicative form of the verb. To cut trees is *ukutema*, while to cut them for some one else, e.g. the chief, or the father-in-law, is *ukutemena*; to hoe is *ukulima*, while to hoe for some one else is *ukulimina*. The two are apparently such different activities in natives' eyes that they bother to stop and correct a stranger who makes a mistake in the linguistic forms. I have several times asked a man if he had been working at a task that morning, saying for

[1] In the old days a boy worked for his father before he married, but his maternal uncle had supreme rights over his labour. Case histories of older Bemba are full of incidents in which the *nalume*, if powerful, was able to send and demand the services of his maternal nephew and insist on his following him 200 or 300 miles from one end of the country to the other.

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instance, 'Did you hoe over there this morning?' (*Bushye mwalimapo lucelo?*) only to be answered with an emphatic denial, 'No I was hoeing there for my chief' (*Nakarya! Naliminapo mfumu*).

The people seem perfectly conscious that legal obligations can be fulfilled by work and reckon up their services as concretely as we do debts in money, although of course with less exactitude. A man with a grievance against a relative was heard saying, 'He refused me porridge! I who bicycled three times to the river to sell his fish!' and such statements are quite common. In legal cases where there is a dispute, probably between the father and the maternal uncle over the guardianship of children, one or other of the disputants will nearly always mention at some time or other the number of times he has cut trees for the mother of the children, or hoed for her, and such service gives legal claims just as the payment of money or provision of food.

Naturally there is a distinction between near and distant relatives in this matter. Though all the members of a family who cook and eat together are supposed to do their share of the work, a close relation will be fed whether he pulls his weight or not. A young son-in-law may lose his bride if he is incorrigibly lazy, as we have seen, but within the lineage group a wastrel is accepted as one of the inevitable crosses of life and endured with more resignation than in our society:[1] but a more distant relative within the classificatory degree only could not be sure of such tolerance, and would have to claim his place in the group and his right to food by the work he did. In such cases the distinction between the co-operating kinsman and the temporary labourer is a fine one.[2] Even adolescent boys and girls recognize quite clearly those relatives who will feed them whatever they do, and those from whom they have to earn their keep. I have a number of cases illustrating this fact. For instance a girl of 14, found grinding alone late in the afternoon outside the house of a classificatory mother instead of her own grandmother with whom she usually lived, answered,

[1] 'Why do you make a garden for your sister when she has a husband sitting round doing nothing?' I asked a man once. 'Because that is his habit (*mwanga wakwe*) to go on sitting like that,' was the answer with a shrug. 'My sister likes that man. She refuses any other. First we scolded him and then we left it. We said, "Let it be! (*Cibe!*) That is his habit."'

[2] Urban natives who employ servants tend to engage their own kinsmen and to incorporate them in their household group, but a distant relative would have short shrift if he did not work, while a near one would probably still be supported.

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437 when questioned, 'I am grinding here because I want to eat here. My heart is angry because my grandmother keeps scolding me.' A boy of 12 in another village seemed to be more assiduous than his 591 fellows in fetching firewood. When I commented on his behaviour 437 I was told, apparently as a quite sufficient explanation, that the child had left his own home in a neighbouring village because he did not like his mother's new husband. He had come to live with a more distant relation—a classificatory sister's husband—instead. With this more remote kinsman he evidently felt the need to ingratiate himself in order to establish his claim for support. The Bemba kinship system allows such great freedom of movement to young people that temporary changes of this kind from one eating group to another are quite frequent.[1] Thus the whole principle of the exchange of work for food is learnt as a practical expedient by children not yet in their teens, and it is on these reciprocal obligations to serve and to feed that the whole political and economic system of the tribe is based.

Organized Forms of Labour.

567 Outside the kinship group there are other recognized forms of labour. In the old days these included the institution of slavery by which a chief or notable acquired rights over the life and labour of men or women, and in return fed and protected them, and provided for their marriage and the upbringing of their children. [68 Slaves, whether captives taken in battle (*ba mabuta*, i.e. of the bow), 727] or Bemba deprived of liberty as a legal punishment, or given as compensation for some irreparable injury such as murder (*ba musoka*) or destruction of gardens,[2] lived as members of the owner's household group, sleeping in their own huts, but fed by him, and not possessing gardens or granaries of their own. No one would know the difference between a slave and a poor relative, I was told, except that the former worked harder and only ate the food left over by the household. Although slavery no longer exists, the

[1] The Bemba touchiness and readiness to detect criticism or slight is shown in childhood. Children who consider that they have been corrected over-harshly announce that they do not 'like' the offending relative any more, and it is not uncommon to say of a small boy of 10 or 11 that he does not like his father (*tatemwa bali wishi*) and for him to move elsewhere for a time. His kinship system and type of housing makes it very possible for him to follow such inclinations.

[2] Or persons voluntarily enslaved as *bulilo*, i.e. usually after having been irreparably insulted.

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institution is worth mentioning as an example of a permanent relationship of exchange of food for labour, and as illustrating in an extreme case the Bemba concept that rights over labour include rights over movement, residence, and life and death.[1] The memory of this institution, still very much alive to-day, certainly affects the attitude of black to white and the ideas of service the older men at any rate are prepared to accept.

Another form of organized labour is the custom known as *ukupula* by which a man or a woman, but usually the latter, can offer service to a householder temporarily, most commonly at a busy time of the year such as harvest. In return he or she gets food, either in the form of a share of the family dish, or a basket of the grain that is being reaped. In such cases the employer is either a distant kinsman who would not be otherwise under any strong obligation to help, or he is no relative at all. The worker is considered to be in an inferior position and spoken of contemptuously or pityingly, as we might of a beggar.[2] Actually, the woman who goes *ukupula* may do exactly the same work as one of the near relatives of the family, and may be given much the same food, but she does not receive what she does by right of kinship, and the phrase *Alepula-pula-fye*, which might be translated, 'she lives by picking up casual jobs', is usually uttered with a rather scornful shrug of the shoulders. Only an absolutely destitute person or an imbecile would reckon to subsist in this way as a regular thing;[3] but as a temporary form of support, *ukupula* has become very common lately as one of the means by which the very large percentage of deserted wives can eke out an existence during the bad times of the year. Travellers returning from the mines, who can no longer reckon to be fed on the march as in the old days, also resort to the practice on occasion. I have seen them do an afternoon's hoeing on their arrival at one of the villages on the main road in order to secure an evening meal.

Another type of service rewarded by cooked food is the communal work done by a man in return for beer. Such working-bees,

[1] A chief could sell a slave to Arab traders, known as *ukupusa* 'to throw away'. A commoner could not do this, but a relative could enslave his *mulopwe* in compensation for some legal fault of his own.

[2] *Ukupula* is often loosely applied to all forms of scrounging, but technically speaking means labour in return for food only. *Ukulomba* means to beg in the sense of asking a favour from a superior, such as a chief or an ancestral spirit, with no possibility of adequate return.

[3] The type of person who would have probably become voluntarily enslaved in the old days.

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common in most primitive societies, are known as *ukutumya* among the Bemba. They consist of groups of men organized to do a day's tree-cutting or hoeing, or of women gathered to pile branches for burning or to reap. Most of the able-bodied men or women of a village would join such an outing, and *ukutumya* parties are usually reckoned as agreeable parties of friends and relatives, as well as a useful means of breaking the back of a big job such as clearing the bush or putting new grass-land under the hoe. The work rarely lasts more than four hours, and the toilers then return to the village, jubilant at the prospect of the beer ahead. However, in spite of the festive note of such *ukutumya* parties, there is a definite exchange of work and food involved. The hostess sends round a dipper of beer to the hut of the worker early in the morning (*ukulalike nkoko*), theoretically so that every one may taste the brew and be assured that the drink is worth working for.[1] The *ubwalwa* itself is set aside for those who have been working during the day. I noticed on one occasion that the women returning from a hoeing party sharply rebuked one of the men of the village for coming to beg a drink from their calabash. They said he must wait until they had drunk their fill. He could have a pull later in the afternoon, when the beer was weak.

In any one year quite an appreciable amount of grain is actually used by the Bemba for *ukutumya* parties of this sort. I should assume that most householders brewed at least once during the season for this purpose, and the desire to have a surplus of grain is sometimes stated to be due to the wish to have 'plenty of beer to brew for my friends when they do my work'. The system is inefficient from the economic point of view perhaps, since the proportion of the day spent in beer-drinking is very large compared to that spent on actual work.[2] However, *ukupula* does give a man what he most wants at certain seasons, i.e. a supply of labour for the heaviest enterprises, such as tree-cutting and hoeing, and it has considerable importance at the present day, since deserted wives, without many relatives to help them, may be unable to get a house or a granary built in any other way. Old women congregated near the town of Kasama wander about from village to village collecting baskets of grain by *ukupula* labour, and

[1] Actually, any Bemba would rather drink sour beer than none at all.

[2] It is not uncommon to find the party returning at 11 or 12 a.m. in order to have time to enjoy the beer!

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437 finally, after some weeks' work, brew beer, and invite men to a
476 *kutumya* party so that they may get some necessary granary or
273 house built.

Distribution at the Chief's Court.

437 The most considerable exchange of food for labour is that which
643 takes place at the capital, whether in payment of tribute workers
644 (*ba mulasa*), courtiers, executive officials, or visiting councillors
651 on tribal business. This whole system of distribution illustrates clearly not only the political and economic ideas of the Bemba but the rules of hospitality already described. Each man or woman who works for the chief[1] should be given food. The men are provided with porridge and relish cooked by the chief's wives, and the women unthreshed millet to prepare for themselves. The workers eat together in one group. The boys and young men who act as personal servants to the chief are also fed separately with cooked food, being mostly unmarried men. Older courtiers, heads of sections of the village (*bafilolo*), or messengers (*bakapasso*) are treated in more honourable fashion. They are sent a share of meat sent in as tribute, or invited to share a pot of beer on the veranda of the chief's hut. At Citimukulu's court, tribal councillors (*bakabilo*), if present in twos or threes, are treated in the same way, but if the whole council is present on matters of state, they will probably stay for a week or ten days, and then they are regularly fed by the chief's wives. In this case the whole council—some forty strong—is divided into groups (*nsaka*) based on descent and historical association.[2] Each of these groups must be provided with a separate basket of porridge and a dish of relish, and sits eating back to back in the chief's enclosure. Honoured visitors, such as members of the royal family, are sent flour, chickens, or beer by the chief and cooked food by his head wife (*umukolo*).

The organization of these supplies is naturally a complicated business. At Citimukulu's court during nine months (April 1933 to January 1934) 561 men and 324 women came to do *umulasa* labour and were fed at least one day of their service. The *bakabilo* to the number of about forty met at least twice during the year, while it is impossible to estimate the number of other persons engaged on a big chief's business. The distribution is of such

[1] Cf. Chapter XIII. About three days a year at the present time.
[2] The *nsaka* of Katongo, of Citikafula, of Cikutwe, and of Citimukulu.

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437 643 644 651 importance politically that it is supervised personally by the *mfumu* himself, who watches meat cut up in front of him and gives the orders for grain to be given out. A special steward is in charge of his big personal granary and hands out baskets of grain each morning to the senior wives in charge of the feeding of the *umulasa* labourers, or the brewing of beer for any special purposes. The wives themselves have their own small personal granaries and cook dishes for the chief which he divides as he pleases,[1] or make presents of beer as they choose. All the three or four senior wives distribute hospitality to honoured guests in their own rights, and the *umukolo*, in particular, is required to be very punctilious in sending dishes of honour to travelling notables.

All the *bamukolo* I met were women of a good deal of organizing ability, capable of supervising the younger wives, arranging for the endless grinding and brewing required in the capital,[2] and the stirring of the huge pots of porridge to be served in enormous eating-baskets about eight times the size of an ordinary *icipe*. Any one who sits in the inside of an *umukolo's* hut during the late afternoon will know at once by the bustle, the concentrated faces, and the ring of waiting food-baskets that important and responsible work is on hand.

The whole of this system of distributing food is of course necessary to the chief if he is to make gardens and conduct tribal business through his councillors. But it is more than this. The giving of food, as in most African tribes, is an absolutely essential attribute of chieftainship, just as it is of authority in the village or household, and the successful organization of supplies at the capital seems to be associated in the Bemba mind with the security and well-being of the whole tribe itself. This fact may be said to be symbolized by the institution of the sacred kitchen (*kamitembo*) at the courts of the big chiefs (Citimukulu, Mwamba, and Nkula). From the outside the *kamitembo* looks like an ordinary hut, although specially well built. It is one of the sacred houses built by the *bakabilo* with special rites at the founding of a chief's new village. In fact it is the first to be built on the site. At Citimukulu's founding ceremony a special hereditary official, the Mwana Bwalya,

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[1] The cooking of the chief's own food is usually done by the *umukolo* herself, or by some old woman specially appointed to the task, since the taboos protecting his fire from sex impurity are very strict.

[2] Chiefs' wives do not have to pile branches in the fields, but do very heavy grinding-work for beer-making and feeding the workers.

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344 cooked on the same sacred hearth. It is in fact the sacred kitchen and storehouse of the tribe.

344 The whole institution of the *kamitembo* illustrates to my mind
437 that close association between authority and the power to distribute
643 provisions on which the tribal organization depends. The chief owns the food and receives tribute, and the chief provides for his subjects and distributes cooked food to them. Both these attributes are symbolized in the *kamitembo* house.

437 We started to discuss the use of food as a payment for labour as part of a study of domestic economics, but we have been inevitably led to consider the deep-rooted political and religious beliefs connected with this form of distribution. They are beliefs that are very much alive to-day and insensibly affect all attitudes between ruler and ruled whether white or black. The European generally gives his native employee food as well as money wages. He does so usually for the purely practical reason that he is afraid that otherwise his servants will starve and spend their money on clothes. But to the native the white man's provision of food puts him in a special relationship which is quite different from an ordinary business transaction. He becomes 'his man' in a special sort of way.

Tribal Distribution and the Individual Ration.

262 We have described the distribution of cooked food among the Bemba, and some of the social and economic uses to which foodstuffs are put. It remains to indicate the effect of these different cultural regulations on the daily intake of the individual members of the tribe. Briefly speaking, these are two in number. A fairly even distribution of supplies is produced in any one village on any particular day, but a great irregularity in the individual amounts eaten as from day to day or month to month.

The causes of these changes in the daily intake can be readily deduced from the foregoing chapters. The first is the varying numbers of helpers who join to form each elder woman's cooking team, giving to some ample labour for the lengthy processes of grinding and cooking, while others belong to so small a family group that they are unable to prepare a proper meal at the busy times of the year.[1]

[1] A point to be borne in mind when the advisability of establishing isolated homesteads for individual families is discussed.

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sums for a particular object against the background of the complicated interchange of services in which the relationship of chief and commoner consists. They pass from one economic system to the other in the course of a day or a week, and they still consider such transactions irregular or out of the usual. They are not calculating to save money, nor do they rely on it in the ordinary course of events.

The Bemba wants money occasionally, and then in relatively speaking large sums—10*s*. for his tax or 5*s*. for a cloth. These sums he usually wants urgently, and is prepared to make unusual efforts to earn the money or to sell any property he has to get it. Less than a given amount apparently seems to him almost useless. In fact, when opportunities of earning money are so scarce the gap between 1*s*. and 10*s*. may well seem unbridgeable, and hence there is no attempt to save in order to reach the higher sum. I noticed that in the outlying districts natives who brought goods for sale asked for the specific sum they wanted almost irrespective of the amount of food they were selling. If I refused, I was often told: 'Well, 5*s*. is what I want, if you won't give me 5*s*., please take it as a present.' In the latter case the native returned to the old system of exchange by which presents offered put the recipient under an obligation to return and, if possible, to return more than he had been given. In the same way, carriers called out for labour will go on long journeys but do not like to sign up for short ones. The idea of regularly accumulating small sums of money in order to acquire greater ones only exists among natives who have a regular earning capacity, and it is natural that it should be so. The old attitude of the Bemba towards the amassing of food and goods, combined with their present limited opportunities for acquiring money, absolutely prevents the regular saving of money to be used to purchase better food.

The introduction of money has encouraged natives to sell more millet than they should, but its circulation is not sufficient to make it useful as a general means of exchange, and the people's attitude to its use still prohibits them working for a regular sale and exchange of food, such as will be necessary if the kinship system of the people still further breaks down.

Types of Exchange.

In this connexion it will be useful to summarize the traditional attitude of the Bemba towards trade or barter itself, and to describe

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437 any type of exchange of goods that actually existed in pre-European days, as apart from the joint consumption and pooling of food within the different kinship units. Formerly it seems clear that, 438 except for food brought to the capital, the only goods which circulated about the country were articles such as ironwork—chiefly hoes—brought from the surrounding tribes, salt carried from the local salt-pans near Mpika, and the various objects such as guns and cloth traded by caravans of Arabs. In most of these cases the goods were brought to the chiefs—whether given as tribute by conquered peoples or fetched by parties of his men. Commoners 439 263 occasionally went to the Lunda area to fetch hoes, or to the salt-pans to bring back balls of salt.[1] Fish was carried as tribute from the bigger rivers or fishing pools, but probably not traded to commoners to any extent.

438 The environmental conditions of the Bemba account to some extent for their poor development of trade, since conditions are, generally speaking, so uniform in this area that there is little reason for one district to exchange goods with another. In the neighbouring swamp area, on the other hand, the Bisa, Ushi, Unga, and other tribelets have control of great supplies of fish, not possessed by the other plateau natives, and they live on small islands each of which seems to lack one essential commodity—whether it is firewood, clay for pots, tall trees for canoe-building, soil for millet for brewing, &c.; and here the people, unlike the Bemba, live by trade with each other and with the European. But besides their environment the history of the Bemba probably limits their trading interests. A dominant tribe can get what it wants from subject peoples and an autocratic chief can monopolize such commodities as ivory, salt, or Arab goods so that the commoner does not reckon to trade with them at all. The Bemba concepts of wealth just described also affect their desire to barter or sell, and make it difficult for them to do so.

But, whatever the reason, the Bemba of to-day have no tradition of commerce, no habit of exchange, and as yet no abilities in this direction. They barter very little and have taken poor advantage of the Government's recent efforts to introduce markets at Kasama, Mpika, and Chinsali.[2] Without roads suitable for motor transport

[1] I am not clear what these parties took as goods to trade with, but heard of particular cases where men worked for the hoes they needed.

[2] The Pim Report [Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the

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such markets could hardly develop to a large extent, since the villages are widely dispersed, and a woman bringing in food to sell is limited by the weight she can carry on her head, i.e. about 50 lb.[1] But nevertheless it seems clear that the Bemba differ strikingly from other tribes in their ability to take advantage of modern methods of trade. For instance, no hawkers licences were issued in the Kasama district in 1937, whereas fifty-five were issued among the cattle-owning Mambwe round Abercorn.[2]

The types of trade that I observed among the Bemba in 1934 were as follows: (*a*) The occasional hawking of such objects as snuff, baskets, mats, or fish by members of surrounding tribes, e.g. the Nsenga from the Loangwa valley, who are great traders; (*b*) occasional expeditions made by the Bemba to other districts to fetch supplies of something they need, e.g. fish from the swamps; (*c*) sporadic exchanges of food for money or goods between local natives during the hunger season; (*d*) barter or sale of food to natives permanently living in white employment and therefore often without their own gardens; (*e*) the barter or sale of craft goods such as axes, baskets, mats, &c.; (*f*) the sale of grain to Europeans. Except in the case of the sales to town natives or to Europeans, none of these forms of exchange is organized or even continuous. The traffic appears to consist of a series of isolated acts which have little reference to previous transactions of the kind, and are not governed by any recognized system of comparative values.

Thus in the remoter villages the people will tell you, 'A man came through the village yesterday and sold us snuff—a lump like this (shown by a gesture)—for an eating basket of grain', and it is clear that this was a single instance and that nothing like a regular schedule of prices or rates of exchange governed the transaction. The hawker may not appear again for a year or two. The expeditions made by the Bemba themselves to surrounding territories have something entirely casual about them. I have seen parties of young men leaving a Bemba village to 'buy fish' among the Bisa of the swamps. Such groups would go off in holiday spirits,

Financial and Economic Position of N. Rhodesia. Colonial 145], 1938, p. 28, comments on the poor success of these markets; and cf. also the figures as to the number of native-owned stores in the district as 6 only in 1935, p. 53. Native Affairs Report of the N. R. Government, 1935.

[1] The lack of a smaller coin than the 3*d*. bits formerly prevented native trade developing, but the Government has introduced cupro-nickel 1½*d*. bits since 1934.

[2] Ibid., 1937, p. 53.

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439 combining the excursion with a series of visits to relatives on the way. They usually seemed to have kinsmen in the villages to which they were going from whom they hoped to get extra presents of fish, to buy more cheaply than usual or, at any rate, to live for a week or so on fish! They were prepared to walk three or four days to their destination and the same distance back, and to return with two or three baskets of fish to last them during the ensuing months. The whole affair struck one as more like a picnic expedition undertaken, Bemba-fashion, on a sudden impulse, than as part of an organized economic undertaking, and it seems that such journeys to other districts to fetch particular local commodities are similar to those made in the old days at the command of a chief. But it must be emphasized that this form of barter was an occasional event rather a habit of life, and it still is so to-day.

437 It is only in the case of the fish trade from the Bangweolu swamps that a regular price is charged per basket. During the hunger season the food situation could be greatly eased by regular barter, since there is often considerable inequality between different villages as to their supplies, but not only is there no regular marketing place in the villages, but all such acts of exchange are completed by natives who are in too great a hurry, too hungry, or too much at the mercy of the whim of the moment to strike what to us would be a sound economic bargain. At this season the people seem to plunge into a series of exchanges of one food for another on which the outsider is inclined to think that they lose each time. A few examples will make this clear. Thus, in January 1934, I saw three women with empty granaries go a journey of twenty-five miles to buy millet with some tobacco one of them had been presented with. They returned with three carrying-baskets of grain (i.e. less than the value of the tobacco), which they started to use. One immediately began to trade some of her millet for beans, another brewed some beer with a large part of the grain in order, she said, to make a shilling to buy more millet again. This was obviously not an economic proposition, since her shilling would have bought her very little new grain at the end of another twenty-five-mile walk, but with the fatalistic attitude produced by some weeks of food shortage, and lack of the habit of regular trading, she probably preferred the exhilaration of a beer drink to a careful hoarding and measuring of her supplies. In the same village a woman had returned from the mines two years ago with five cotton

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frocks. Two had worn out and two were in use, but the fifth remained. Driven to desperation by the food shortage, she walked to the Chambesi river and exchanged her 5*s.* frock for a 2*s.* basket of fish. On her return thirty miles to her home, she immediately sold some of the fish for a small quantity of millet (again at less than its current price) and with the millet made two gourds of beer. One she sold for a shilling and the other she and her relatives drank. In all such cases the Bemba in the hunger season seem to walk huge distances, make bad bargains on sudden impulses, and then squander the products of the expedition.

Near Kasama, where there are natives living in the white township or its neighbourhood, the Bemba lack of trading ability is shown even more strikingly. Here there are a number of men employed by Europeans, unable to make gardens either because they have been too short a time in the district, because they have left their wives behind, or because cultivated land is short. They have to buy food from the surrounding villages with money or with goods.[1] They prefer the latter because it is more economical: 'Salt is better because you can give a little at a time. Besides, women often want salt in a hurry and they agree to sell you what you want.' But here again, in 1934 at any rate, the buyers had to spend money on snuff, cloth, or salt without knowing which the sellers would happen to want that day, and there was no fixed rendezvous at which purchaser and seller could be certain of meeting. The wives of the domestic servants in one compound I knew used to get up at five in the morning and go along the different country roads hoping to waylay the incoming villagers before they reached the town. Quite frequently they came back empty-handed after waiting some hours because the sellers had gone the other way! Want of leadership and a rapidly changing situation may explain this lack of organization, but surely no tribe with the slightest tradition of trading would have failed to make some arrangement by which the sellers and purchasers of goods could be certain of meeting.

Bemba, who are recognized as being more skilled than their fellows at crafts—pot-making, basket- or mat-weaving, or the

[1] A clerk of a steady economical type estimated that he spent 6*s.* 2*d.* a month for himself and his family out of a 16*s.* wage, while two Government messengers' budgets came to 5*s.* and 7*s.* 6*d.* respectively. A cook, known to be a prodigal spender, as he called it, 'wasted' £1 a month on food and beer for himself and his two wives.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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437 forging of iron axe-blades or spear-heads—exchange their articles for goods, service, or money. But I never met a man who traded regularly in this fashion, who lived on the proceeds of his industry, or who travelled about the country selling his wares. In fact, the greatest initiative I ever noted was shown by one of Citimukulu's old hereditary priests, who sold baskets to villagers for chickens, and then sold the latter, ten or twelve at a time, to Europeans.

439 Trade with Europeans consists for the main part of sales of grain to the Government stations or missions. In 1934 the price varied from ½*d.* a lb. during harvest months to 1½*d.* during the rainy season [435] in the Chinsali area. The Government station at Mpika also bought £140 of salt at 1*d.* a lb. But it is difficult to estimate the total amount of food sold over the whole area.

437 To conclude, it can be said that the Bemba, owing to their particular environment and social organization, reckon to live by means of mutual support within their kinship groups, and only resort to the barter or sale of the goods they need sporadically, or on occasions of necessity. Then either temperament or their patterns of economic thought make them extraordinarily inept, according to European standards. Marketing, like any other form of economic activity, is evidently based on a system of values developed in earliest youth, and the trading instinct seems to be difficult to acquire by a people who have not been through such a training.

437 The contrast between Bemba children and those of the Bisa of the 184 fishing villages in the Bangweolu swamps is striking. There the children are accustomed from earliest infancy to hear the sales of fish and other commodities discussed, and I found that they themselves continually talked of the values of different objects, and even of their own services. When I asked them to do something for me they replied automatically, 'How much will you give me? Yes, but what kind of beads and how many?' Having struck their bargain, they kept to it. The Bemba children, on the other hand, accepted such requests for help by politely clapping their hands, as to a chief. They never bargained or refused, but on the other hand they considered their services made me liable to help them and feed them, and they were constantly on the look-out for their dues. They left the work if they became convinced, for some reason or other, that I did not 'like' them. In Bemba society economic transactions are based on a system of personal relationships—ties

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of kinship or political status—and in the Bisa country on an organized system of commercial exchange superimposed on these social ties. These and many other incidents made me think that the introduction of marketing in the Bemba area would be a slow process liable to many set-backs, however essential it be to their progress at the present time.

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CHAPTER XVI

FISHING AND HUNTING

FISHING and hunting will be discussed only cursorily in these pages. It is, however, necessary just to touch on these activities in order to be able to complete the economic calendar of work. 226

Fishing Methods.

The Bemba cannot be described as a fishing tribe. As a food, fish makes one of their favourite relishes, and is reckoned nearly as great a treat as meat. They catch fish whenever they can, and very much appreciate dried fish, but such food is regarded rather as a sudden piece of luck than as a regular article of diet, and fishing itself in a greater part of the country is an amusing pursuit, particularly when undertaken communally, rather than a serious means of getting one's livelihood. Among the neighbouring [184] Bisa, a fishing tribe living on Lake Bangweolu, each fish is known by name and referred to as such, and every child in the community is able to pick out the different sorts correctly from a heap. But [825] among the Bemba, though different types are recognized by the older men, the rest of the natives just speak of 'fish'. The Bisa regularly dry fish and trade it over the country. They have a fixed [437] system of prices and reckon each catch carefully in terms of financial profit. The Bemba, on the other hand, only sell fish occasionally, at certain seasons of the year, and then by a process of casual barter. Apart from those who live by the banks of big rivers [502] they are indifferent boatmen and handle clumsily the paddles of the dug-out canoes at river fords. Along the Chambesi, Luansenshi, 226 and other big rivers there are, however, definite fishing villages 463 recognized by the natives as such. These villages remain fixed in [36] one position year in year out. Here we find fishing by one method or another going on all the year round, a complex system of ownership of weirs and rights of use of ponds, and special fishing ceremonies such as are not found over the rest of the plateau. The 226 inhabitants of these villages are definitely specialist fishermen, dis- 463 tinguished by name as *umulonga* (plur. *abalonga*) and considered very 829 exclusive and even dour by the rest of the Bemba. The latter discuss the habits of these fishermen as though they were almost a

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(c) Economic Background. The Bemba are an Agri-

Cultural people

like most of the Central Bantu group to which they belong. They keep no cattle. Tsetse-fly at present prevents their keeping stock over most of the country, but in any case they seem to have no pastoral traditions, whatever they may have had formerly. Thus they have no means of storing wealth as have the Southern Bantu. Their marriage contracts are fulfilled by service and not by the passage of cattle. In the old days military glory and the extraction of tribute from conquered peoples seems to have been the dominant ambition of the Bemba chiefs, and their wealth consisted in the size of their following and the amount of service they were able to command. This fact profoundly influences their position at the present day (cf. p. 116).

The soil of most of this district is poor and it has not attracted white settlement. The staple crop is finger millet (*eleusine corecana*), while some kafir corn, a little maize, legumes, and pumpkins are also grown. The people practise shifting cultivation of a primitive type, and the plentiful supply of land and the lack of any localized natural resources which might attract the inhabitants to settle in one area rather than another all affect the political system. As has been shown, they decrease the strength of local ties as against political or kinship affiliations, and they account for the fact that the power to distribute land is not an important prerogative of leadership in distinction to conditions in most Southern Bantu tribes.

Hunting and fishing contribute a small share of the food-supply only. Organized marketing does not exist, and under modern conditions no cash crop has been found for this area. This fact, together with the absence of opportunities for local employment, forces the adult male population to look for work outside the tribal area, with resultant effects, as will be seen, on the political system of the tribe.

(*d*) *White Administration.* The type of white administration introduced in this area is described on pp. 112–20.

III. Bases of Authority

The positions of leadership in Bemba society consist of the following offices: (*a*) *territorial rulers* (chiefs and headmen); (*b*) *administrative officers and councillors*; (*c*) *priests, guardians of sacred shrines, and magic specialists with economic functions*; (*d*) *army leaders* in the old days. Succession to all these offices is